A VISION OF HEAVEN AND HELL

my spiritual rebirth

by Dushan Yovanovich Kragujevac
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In July of 1976, when I was forty-eight years old, I had a spiritual vision which completely changed my life. In this report I will describe as completely as possible the events which happened to me on July 11 of that year. As a disabled veteran, I spend a couple of weeks each year in one of our health spas for physical therapy. In 1976 I spent the end of June and a portion of July in Mataruska spas and stayed in the Hotel "Zica."

After ten days of treatments, I interrupted my stay in the spas on July 9 to return home to Kragujevac. There I attended a one-year memorial service given for a deceased, close relative of mine. The day following the memorial service at about 10 a.m. on July 11, I drove the road from Kragujevac to Mataruska spas to resume my therapy.

When I reached the bridge on the river lbar in Kraljevo, I ran into a traffic jam, which apparently was caused by an accident near a gas station on the road to the monastery Zica. A policeman directed traffic alternately in one direction or the other - a slow method, but the best possible solution.

After the bridge, I turned right onto the road for Zica. About thirty-five or forty-five yards from the bridge was a local bus station for passengers traveling between Mataruska spas and Zica. About twenty passengers waited there, among them a monk and a nun. These two stood out because they were very good-looking. The monk was of medium height, about seventy years old (although he acted

much younger) with a gray, bushy and curly beard. He wore a new black robe, and a tall hat (kamilavka) covered with a long black veil reaching down his back. On his chest he wore a shiny cross on one chain or braid and a medallion or small icon on another. The icon looked as if it were St. Mary with Jesus Christ - a woman's face with a child.

The nun who stood beside the monk wore a long black dress. Her head was also covered with a tall hat similar to the monk's hat, but her veil was shorter and reached only to her shoulders. She was of medium height and very pretty with beautiful, big eyes. Like the monk, she wore a shiny cross and medallion on her chest. All of this glowed in the sun. At the time I could not recognize their ranks, which is why this description is so poor.

The monk and nun tried unsuccessfully to stop one of the passing cars by raising their hands. Many cars had room for two or more passengers, but no one wanted to stop. I thought critically, "Why? Monks and nuns are as much humans as we are! Why do the people turn their heads away from them? I could not stand this discrimination toward monks and nuns, and decided to pick up the pair if no one before me did. As I approached, they signaled me to stop, too. I accepted their call and pulled over. The monk came to me and said, "God help us." I answered, "God help us." I did not usually greet people this way, because I did not believe in God. I answered only to please him.

The monk asked if I could take him and the nun to the monastery Zica. I said I could and invited them into the car.

I opened the right door and pushed the front seat forward so one of them could get into the back of the car. Then the nun came and greeted me in the same way; I answered "God help us!" as I had before. She got into the car first, and sat on the back seat directly behind me. Then the monk got into the back seat beside her. I suggested that he come to the empty front seat so everyone could have more room, but the monk answered, "It is not crowded here. Dushan, go ahead and drive!"

After these words I fell silent. I locked the right-hand door through which they entered the car to prevent the door from accidently opening. I turned the car toward the road and waited for someone to let me back into the line.

While waiting, the monk asked, "Are you coming from Kragujevac where you attended a memorial service?" He asked a question and answered it at the same time. I was very surprised that he knew my name and where I came from. Confused, I did not have time to regain my composure, so I answered, "Yes, I have come from Kragujevac. Yesterday we had a memorial service for a relative of mine. The monk listened to me and said, "You are going to the health spas, but you are not taking the therapeutic baths?" "I don't dare take them because the water in the spas is rather warm, and I am afraid that after a bath I would catch a cold, and feel more miserable than I felt before I came to the spas," I answered him.

As soon as the monk finished talking, the nun asked me: "Dushan, where were you born? In Zakuta!" and thus she

too, asked me a question and answered it at the same time. Then she continued: "Dushan, everybody in your family is alive and well: your father Dimitry, your mother Darinka, sister Dusanka, and your brother Dragoljub. They all believe in God, they celebrate the Krsna Slava, but they are a little inconsistent. In anger they curse God. Your brother Milovan is a very educated man, a highly trained specialist, but at the same time a great atheist."

When she finished, the monk said, "And you, Dushan, believe that God created man. You do not support that "scholarly" view that man descended from monkey, but you do not pray to God. You have a kind heart and you are honest. On three occasions you could have become rich, but you did not because you did not want to be dishonest: you are kind toward old and poor. Because of your kindness you stopped, answered our greeting with "God help us!" and took us into your car. You are fortunate that you did this: the others who passed us, turned their heads away and spat on us. They would be better off if they were never born than to have refused us."

I did not understand the deep meaning of these words, but I trembled with fear. Just then a driver signaled for me to get back into line ahead of him, which I did immediately. Soon we passed the site of the accident. Just as I decided to increase my speed to get to Zica sooner, a truck loaded with bricks and other building materials pulled from a small side road into the traffic ahead of me. This slowed us considerably, since I had to drive cautiously behind him and passing was still difficult. I often checked the traffic behind

me to see if anyone wanted to pass me. One time, as I looked into the rearview mirror I saw an unexpected sight; the faces of the monk and nun glowed and above their heads halos shone with blinding intensity. I trembled with excitement and realized that these were not common humans.

These events upset me so that I began to drive even more cautiously. The monk and the nun told my life story from the earliest day I could remember to the present. They recalled all my deeds - good and bad. They even told of private plans which I had abandoned for various reasons. To my surprise, they described events from my life as accurately as if they read them from a book. They praised my good deeds and reprimanded me with a soft voice for my indecent life. I wanted to sink into the earth from fear and shame, or do something to stop this torture, but there was no choice. I had to hear and endure everything.

I will not talk about all their reprimands, because they concerned my very private life. Later I confessed them and asked for forgiveness. I will, however, describe in greater detail one important reprimand, which came from the nun, since it is instructive to others.

"Dushan," she said, "why did you refuse to talk to your father when your family attended the birthday party at the home of your cousin, Desa?" I answered, “My father was neglecting me in comparison with the other children. He did not have the right attitude with us and I wanted to hurt and embarrass him by not talking to him in public." The

nun said, "Who are you, and who are we to judge the others? The Lord is the only one who will judge and see that justice is done! The Lord said in one of his Commandments that we must respect our father and mother. He promised a reward to those who obey it - a long and happy life on earth. Parents are sacred to their children in this world. You are fortunate that you regretted your behavior toward your father and went to him the next day, embraced him and asked him for forgiveness. Your father cried from joy and said, "I forgive you my son!" The nun told everything exactly as it happened, and this lesson left me speechless.

When we arrived at the bridge near the monastery Zica, the monk addressed me. "Dushan, for three months you must not tell anyone what just happened nor what will happen to you today. After that you can tell everything only to your family and friends." I gave him the briefest answer and looked again into the rearview mirror before turning into the monastery’s front parking lot. To my surprise, I saw again the halos above their heads. Unnerved, I felt a tremendous urge to get away from these two as soon as possible.

In the parking lot were several cars and a large group of tourists who were visiting the monastery and its surroundings. I drove the car almost to the monastery wall, and got out to open the door for the monk and the nun, to my surprise. when I looked inside, the car was empty. My eyes searched from the open left door to the right door which was still locked. I could not believe my eyes. I looked very carefully several more times, but the car was

empty.

Disbelief, fear and trembling suddenly shook my body. I was afraid I was losing my mind, so I bit my hands, pulled my hair, and slapped my face. As I tormented myself I did not notice that the tourists had gathered around me. I heard them ask what was wrong with me, and I managed to say, 'Please leave me alone!" I walked quickly through the circle of onlookers to calm down and to compose my thoughts.

Once alone, I looked at my watch; it was 11:30 am. I remembered every word my passengers said from the moment they got into my car until they inexplicably disappeared when we arrived. Their last caution was that for three months I should not tell anyone what happened and what would still happen that day was the most confusing. I started to talk aloud, "Oh, Lord what can still happen to me? I will go immediately to the health spas. I will not eat lunch; instead I will go right to bed to rest. What can happen to me?" I repeatedly asked myself. "Maybe I will die?" Then I remembered I must not tell anything to anyone for the three months, so I concluded I would live at least that long. It seemed a little funny, then, that just a moment ago I feared for myself, but I was still unable to understand and explain any of these events.

After a brief rest I continued my journey to Mataruska spas, but to this day I do not understand how I managed the drive while so upset. Fortunately, I arrived at the spas without incident, but I was very confused and exhausted.

It was a few minutes before noon when I passed the hotel

"Zica." Guests were going into the restaurant for lunch. I was not hungry: more than anything else I needed rest. I took my belongings from the car, and went to my room. There I laid down to think in greater detail about the morning.

Contrary to my habit, I laid down on the bed dressed. Soon thereafter I felt a pain in the middle of my chest which was followed by something resembling a strong pinprick directly into the heart. I became irresistibly sleepy and fell into a deep sleep.

What happened next was more vivid than any reality. The door of my room opened wide. The whole room filled with light. An angel with wings entered. He was very handsome, and had long hair tied in a ponytail at the back of his head. He wore a long shiny tunic, over which he wore another shinier, sleeveless one. On his feet were apostle's sandals. The angel said: "Dushan, get up, we are going for a walk!" Obediently, I got up. As we were about to leave, the angel said, "Dushan, you are very lucky to have picked up the monk and the nun, and to have answered their greeting with 'God help us.' Do you know who they were?" I shrugged my shoulders and was about to speak when he said, "They were Saint Apostle Peter and Saint Paraskeva- your Krsna Slava!" I remembered that my father celebrated Saint Paraskeva and it was immediately clear who my passengers were.

The angel led me out of the room and then uphill. along the left side of the entrance to the spas as you look from the

monastery Zica. We walked a while without talking. But before long the angel said, "Dushan, you work with people... you have many friends. You have said, "All a man can do is eat, drink, get dressed, and have fun while he is alive. When a man dies he only needs about two meters of ground length-wise and a little dirt above -yes that is all." You should know, Dushan, that death is not the end of life. Rather, it is a gate, a station, through which every human must pass. God created man from earth and breathed into him the spirit and thus humans became living souls."

The angel ended this story as we reached the top of the hill. In that moment a dense cloud descended in front of us. We went into it and immediately began to rise. As the cloud carried us, the angel continued to talk. "Dushan, because of your kind heart which loves justice and honesty, the Lord has decided to have mercy on you and to show you the true road of salvation." After these words, the cloud stopped, and the angel said, "Look at the earth!" I saw the whole earth, countries, cities, villages, rivers, seas and oceans, animals, and people. I recognized their faces very well. I then turned toward the angel and saw behind him many other angels with trumpets standing in three rows. They glowed with an enormous intensity and were beautiful beyond description.

My guide then said. "Dushan, look down to earth and you will see how the dead shall rise when the archangels sound their trumpets and the Lord Jesus Christ comes to earth to judge the living and the dead!" When I turned my eyes downward, the archangels sounded their trumpets. At that

moment graves started to open and the dead began to come out of them. I was surprised, but I was much more surprised when I saw men, women and children coming out of rivers, seas, fires, from animal jaws, and from many other places where they vanished from their earthly life. I was speechless but the Angel explained these events to me. "Dushan, why are you surprised? At the sound of trumpets they return to life just as they ended their lives on earth, regardless whether they were swallowed, burned, or eaten by animals ... in the presence of God everything is possible, and nothing is dead; in His presence everything is alive!"

I was also surprised to see on each forehead a piece of paper with writing on it. Some papers were filled, and others had very little writing on them. I wondered what the writing was, but before I had a chance to ask, the angel answered that question. "The written text describes the deeds from their earthly lives and with them they will appear for judgement before the Lord Jesus Christ." He also mentioned that all their thoughts were written there too, so that nothing remained concealed. Among the resurrected I saw my relatives, friends, neighbors and many acquaintances whom I met over the years. I was very glad to see them, and they were very happy to see me. They stretched their arms and spoke to me, but I could not hear a word. Judging by my relatives and friends I concluded that they were grouped into families, because relatives stood beside each other. Then the angle told me, “We must continue our journey, but we will come back to this place later.”

After these words the cloud moved in the easterly direction and higher. As we moved I saw a lot of people, looking like glowing shadows moving around us in all directions. Their arms, legs, heads, and faces were easily recognizable. I wondered who all these people were when, as if he read my thoughts, the angel said, "”These are not humans, but only human souls. God is the Light, and after creating humans from earth, He breathed His spirit into them. Humans then became living souls, which is why the souls glow. When a soul leaves a human body it retains sight, hearing, speech, memory, feelings and some other features which it had when it was in the body." He also told me that the soul is present in every part of the body and that it is the moving force of the whole organism. Without the soul there is no life in the body. Then he explained to me that when the soul leaves the body, it re-lives its earthly life in the next forty days. Everything the soul has done, said, or thought is reviewed, and after forty days it goes to heaven to be judged and sent to the place it deserves.

We concluded our observation of resurrection of the dead and our conversation on human souls. The cloud took us still higher. We traveled through the cosmos which is impossible to describe. Its complicated and frightening appearance constantly caused such terror in me that I continuously pressed against my angel.

These fears practically disappeared when we arrived at a beautiful meadow surrounded by a huge fence, resembling a wall without visible beginning or end. On that fence was a gate in the shape of the Cross. To the right of the gate stood

an angel-guard. The whole fence and the gate in particular were beautifully decorated and shiny.

At this place, which I do not know how to name, were many of those souls I saw while traveling through the cosmos. Some were shinier than others. There were many angels around them, but also many demons in monstrous shapes. The demons tried to prevent souls from getting through the gate after the souls obtained permission to do so from the angel-guard. I could not understand this scene and asked myself why some souls stood in groups, why this, and why that. Again without hearing my questions, my angel answered. "Dushan, you could not endure it if you were told everything." Then he led me through the gate.

The road from this first gate to the next was straight as an arrow and very narrow. Right and left from the road edge, along its entire length, was a very steep, bottomless gap. The areas between the gates were similar, but the road became increasingly narrow. At the last gate it had only the width of a human foot.

After a brief journey we arrived at a gate more beautiful and shiny than the previous one. Here, too, I saw souls with their guardian angels, demons, and another angel guard. The demons tried even harder to prevent permitted souls from passing through the gate. But they were able to go through, since souls which have gotten permission to enter the cross-like gate are freed from the onslaught of the demons.

We passed through all the gates, none of them exactly alike.

Each was more beautiful than the previous one, and the angels standing at these various gates were dressed differently from one another.

At the last gate stood an extremely handsome young man who closely resembled my angel. In his left hand he held a book and in his right hand a sword. He smiled at us kindly and bowed as we passed on the extremely narrow path. Immediately after this gate we found ourselves in light of enormous intensity. Before, the light was as bright as normal daylight. The difference between this new light and normal daylight was like the difference between the sunniest day and the darkest night on earth. Surprised, I looked around to find the sun, but my angel told me that we left the solar system long ago. We were now in the firmament of our Lord, which is lit by the eternal brightness of God's Face.

The fear and trembling I felt continuously before we came here, suddenly disappeared and I was filled with an indescribable serenity and joy.

From the top of the firmament I saw below a beautiful picture of an endless city. Houses, churches, parks and many other divine beauties, were scattered all over heaven. Everything shone and sparkled with unusual brightness. My attention was attracted by two large rivers, one yellow and one white which flowed slowly through this city. My angel saw my confusion and explained that these were rivers of milk and honey. I noticed many very small creeks like branches, going from the rivers watering each plant.

Deeply impressed by this scenery, I felt a light tremor in my soul, which filled me with such a thrill that I unconsciously stretched my arms in that direction.

The desire to touch and to embrace all of this was great, but my angel interrupted me and soon thereafter we landed in that wonderful place. My surprise and joy were boundless. I could not decide where to look first. All around us, everything grew with unimaginable vigor. Paradise was like nothing I had ever seen before. The soil was like glass, clean as a crystal, and those small creeks flowed below the surface like rivers which disappear into the earth.

At various distances were beautiful houses of different sizes and shapes. Each was so richly decorated that their ornaments looked like finest jewels. Roofs of these houses were particularly striking and reminded me a little of roofs on Russian churches with many cupolas. This magnificent architecture looked even more beautiful under the blindingly bright light which reflected from their surfaces. These divine castles were surrounded by parks brimming with beautiful trees and flowers. Everything smelled indescribably pleasant, and the fragrances were carried in all directions by light breezes. I was amazed to see some flowers opening their buds continuously while others occasionally changed their colors, and emitted intoxicating fragrances. Together with these plants I saw many different fruit trees decorated with fruits as if they were the most beautiful necklaces. The fruits from these trees were almost invariably large, and the juice, which visibly flowed through them, was abundant. The Angel told me that the

trees bore fruit twelve times a year. I also saw many vineyards, especially on the riverbanks, but occasionally around the houses, too. The bright green leaves and red grapes of the vineyards gave me an impression of an utmost serene, cultivated land. With these undreamed-of beauties was an abundance of most beautiful birds which I could have watched and listened to forever. Throughout Paradise I saw many people of all ages. The old people looked particularly pleasant and amazing. The only apparent signs of old age were white hair and white beards; otherwise their faces were transformed into faces of young people. I was even more amazed by the children, who in many respects equaled the angels. In parks and many other places I watched them play various games. Many made wreaths and other decorations from flowers, and the birds landed on their shoulders, flapped their wings and sang, enhancing the games with their docile presence. I also noticed that children and adults dressed differently. The children's dresses were shiny, and colored and cut unlike those of adults. They were beautifully fitted and varied in accordance with the person's merits. Around their heads the children had halos smaller than the halos of angels and saints. The Lord rewarded their pure and innocent lives giving them all the pleasures of Paradise.

An infinite number of angels were there, too, and the fineness and beauty of their faces is impossible to imagine. Their faces were brighter than the sun and their clothing reflected light like lightning. The young, the old, and the angels were friendly and in many places sang together

praising the Lord.

As we walked through Paradise, I was overcome with awe. My angel and I walked effortlessly and at times very quickly. At one point we reached a place which surpassed in beauty all the places I had previously seen. Here, just in front of us on the right-hand side, stood a row of higher heavenly ranks in a long, orderly manner. To our left stood many others chosen by God. Those in both rows were separated into groups according to rank. Their beauty is impossible to describe with appropriate words.

In front of this assembly, my Angel slowed down, turned to the right and, indicating with his hand, explained, "These are angels, and these are archangels.” He turned to the left and said, "These are saints, and these are hermits." He again turned to the right and continued, "These are cherubs, and these are seraphs." Again my angel turned to the left and said, “These are monks, and these are martyrs who together gave their lives for the Lord Jesus Christ and so earned the glory of heaven." He turned once more to the right and said, "These are apostles...” In that moment my angel stopped talking because from the group of apostles stepped the Apostle Peter. From our left appeared saint Mother Paraskeva who came over and stood beside the Apostle Peter.

The passengers I took that day from Kraljevo to Zica stood now before us in the fullest glory and radiance. They wore glowing crowns on their heads and over their dresses they wore vestments which sparkled with blinding intensity from

indescribable decorations. Over their right shoulders and across their chests they wore beautifully decorated sashes as marks of distinction. They were fully arrayed in the splendor of Paradise.

As my angel showed me Paradise, it never crossed my mind that I might meet my passengers again. Now, surprised by meeting them and by their appearance, I watched them with fascination; I could not take my eyes away from them. The soft voice of the holy Apostle Peter roused me from this reverie. "Do you know now, Dushan, who you took into your car today?" Without trying to hide my joy, I answered, 'Yes, I do!" Addressing me further, the apostle continued, “Starting today, you must stop being a non-believer and become a believer. You must cross-yourself in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." He then showed me how to cross myself.

As a child, I crossed myself from forehead to chin. Taught by the example of the Apostle Peter, I understood immediately that way was incorrect and I now learned how I should do it in the future. The apostle waited a little while, and then continued to give me advice, "In your prayers you should call on all the saints, prophets, apostles, angels, archangels, cherubs, and seraphs, but most of all call upon God's mother, the Most Holy Mother of Jesus, Maria, because her glory and honor are greater than that of all the angels in heaven. She is the quick helper to all who, in faith and through prayer, ask her aid! Starting today you must abandon the habits that are deeply rooted in you, and you must celebrate your Slava - Saint Paraskeva, who prays for

all who celebrate her," and he pointed to her. “All that you see today, Dushan, -all that archangel Gabriel will still show you, is a blessing to you, to your family, and to all who believe you. But the blessing will not be enough if you, after that, do not follow the path of our Lord, Jesus Christ. I tell you, Dushan, that you can save yourself if, for the rest of your life, you fast, pray, and obey the commandments.”

The seriousness of the great apostle's words left a deep impression on my soul. I stood motionless until I was roused by archangel Gabriel who continued his explanations, "These are God's prophets, and these are martyrs." He introduced me to them one by one, and each, when presented, gently smiled and bowed.

Next, the angel took me through more of Paradise. By the way, I should mention that I could see extremely far with my bare eyes, and could recognize at great distances the smallest details as if they were very near. I could see much better and much farther than when I watched the resurrection of the dead from the cloud. The Lord gave me this ability while I traveled through the spiritual world.

As we wandered through Paradise, I saw countless beautiful churches made from pure gold and precious stones. Doors on these churches were wide open and one could hear magnificent religious services accompanied by songs sung by choirs of angels, archangels and saints.

The angel slowed our pace only when he wanted me to see something better, but he never stopped. I do not remember how long we walked, when abruptly we slowed almost to a

halt. Before us, at a great distance, was a hill. There I saw the crucified Lord, and above His cross a large dove with spread wings hovered. The cross radiated blinding light in all directions and around its base stood many multi-winged angels, the archangels, apostles, prophets and saints praising the glory of the Crucified Lord. Behind the cross, I saw several huge churches and some other buildings.

The cloud waited where my angel took me out of Paradise. As we entered it, the cloud moved to the west. This time I could not see where we were going, but I had the impression that we did not travel long when the cloud suddenly started to descend with dizzying speed into a gorge. Somewhere in that abyss the cloud stopped and we stepped out into darkness. After a few steps the darkness became blacker than anything I'd ever known. From the depths of this darkness came a vile, foul smell which stifled our breath. I felt that something horrible was ahead of us, but I had no idea what. Fear and trembling overcame me so I huddled closely to my angel for protection. My foreboding soon proved true. Far in front of us appeared an endless sea burning with a horrible flame. We soon arrived at this place and stopped in front of it on a high wall which surrounded the place of eternal flame and horror.

The scene which raged before our eyes suddenly blurred my senses; my limbs, paralyzed from earlier fear, became completely numb. My eyes shut, and a cold shiver was the only sign that I was still alive. When I opened my eyes and looked again, I saw before us, like a crater of a raging volcano, boiling, foul smelling, sulfureted water and a

horrible, gushing flame. "This sea is not equally deep. There, where the flame is fifty yards high, the sea is deepest," said my angel.

In this indescribably horrible scene I saw countless, most terrifying animals created to serve as horrible torturers. Giant snakes, with one or several wiggling heads, raised themselves and took sinners into the terrible depths of the fiery sea, embracing them with a steel like grip. I saw some other animals which looked even more terrifying. From their bloody mouths, legs, arms and other parts of human bodies stuck out. Among them, as in a hornet's nest, worms, scorpions and other disgusting pests, stimulated by an eruptive energy, constantly and madly, jumped, throwing themselves upon the sinful souls.

Screams, shrieks, and cries of longing came from many human voices. In this burning sea human souls were as helpless as fish in shallow water. From all directions they were attacked by countless swarms of these monsters which bit and tore them apart. The torn and disfigured bodies were then again assembled into complete human bodies.

I almost fell from fear into this flame, but my angel caught me and said. "Do not be afraid, Dushan! We are now in hell. These snakes and other pests here were created by God in such a way that flame and hot water cannot hurt them. They will, as you can see, always bite and suck the blood of sinners. Everybody in this fire will be cooked and baked forever."

The spectacle of these sinners' torture was unbearable, and

several times I closed my eyes. Once, when I could not stand the sight anymore, I turned my head into the darkness, but there horrible black monsters with fiery eyes and wide open jaws were waiting. Roaring, they flew around us with bewildering speed, and their hellish shouts sounded like terrible thunder. The angel sensed that I was at the limit of my endurance and said to me, "Do not be afraid. These are demons, and we are disturbing them. They are irritated by our presence, but dare not come closer." The angel continued to talk, "You saw, Dushan, how mortals who do not believe in God are tortured. These are not the only ones who are to be tortured in this way forever. This also will happen to those who renounce God, who pray to a false or fictitious god, and to those who cherish and see their god in their checkbooks, houses, summer homes, cards, jewels, unruly life, or in their bellies. With them will be tortured those who do believe in God, but are afraid to acknowledge Him publicly. To eternal torture will be sentenced those who do not respect their fathers, mothers or relatives. In addition to these sinners, those who preferred sin to the honest life will be thrown into this fire - liars, perjurers, swindlers, adulterers, the greedy, those who laughed at others, who were malicious, who were envious, who were evil, and many others like them. If you do not want that to happen to you repent and confess your sins when you return to earth."

After these words the angel took my hand and with dashing speed led me out of hell. At the exit the cloud again waited for us. It took us near to where I had watched the

resurrection of the dead, but this time we were closer to the earth.

All the resurrected people I saw earlier were now gathered into three large groups. In the first group, on the right, were people with bright and smiling faces. To their left, in a second group, stood a much larger group of people with sad and dark faces. To the far left, in the third group, were countless people with very dark and evil faces. After I saw these people, the angel explained, "These on the right with bright and happy faces are righteous people. A divine reward awaits them, because they earned it with their honest earthly lives. These in the middle group, with darker faces, are naive sinners - those with small sins. One should pray to the Lord for them, and in their names do good deeds so that their sins will be forgiven. Such prayers and good deeds are most beloved by God. These on the far left are grave sinners. They are disfigured according to their sins and they will be thrown into the eternal flame."

The grave sinners looked horrible. Their bodies were swollen and wound covered; filthy pus dripped from their wounds while broods of snakes and worms ate their decomposing bodies. Their swollen tongues hung from their mouths, unable to be pulled back inside. Each sinner held something to denote his earthly profession. Bakers held breads, butchers held cleavers, criminals held bloody knives and revolvers. Millers and merchants held scales and other measuring tools which showed how they had cheated. One could see that some short-weighed goods and became rich that way. There were physicians who asked for

bribes before treating patients and left to die in pain those who could not afford to pay. I saw sorcerers and fortune-tellers as they prepared their magic, extinguished coal, read coffee cups, palms, or cards with the intent of breaking up marriages, separating loved ones or joining those who did not love each other. They acted for money, so in addition to their magic paraphernalia were piles of money. Punishment fell upon those who asked for money in return for employment or blackmailed some women or girls into living promiscuously with them in return for a job or better position. I saw rakes, promiscuous women, and women who killed their own children so they might live promiscuously with other men. Here, too, were cases of grave incest where fathers led promiscuous lives with daughters, mothers with sons, and brothers with sisters. The promiscuous, like other sinners, were disfigured with large swellings and open wounds. Their enlarged sex organs reached the ground and upon them, in the pus, crawled snakes and worms. These were most horrible scenes!

I was particularly surprised to see members of the religious in this group. Bishops, priests, deacons, monks, and nuns looked much like criminals, the greedy, the promiscuous, the cheaters, perjurers, and other sinners. As he read my thoughts the angel said, "Do not be surprised, Dushan, that they are in the group of gravest sinners. They voluntarily took an oath before the Cross and the Bible to faithfully serve our Lord and to follow Christ's path. They pledged to preach and, by their good example, to lead people on the

Lord's path and into churches for their salvation. However, they did just the opposite; they preached one thing and did another. They shortened sermons, liturgies, baptisms, wedding ceremonies, funeral services, requiems, blessings of water, cutting of the Slava cake, and other religious services. They became greedy. They took more money from the poor and from believers than from the rich and the influential people in society. They liked adultery, cursing, drinking, eating, gambling, summer homes and cars. They were hypocrites and envious. They disparaged one another to elevate themselves. Their actions turned away many good people, who came to pray and who wanted to pray, but who, disgusted by what they saw, left their religion and with it their Krsna Slava and other religious customs.

Remember, Dushan, to divert someone from religion is equal to murder. If these clergymen had served as good examples, the people would have come to God and they would have been saved. Consequently, these clergymen are charged with the many sins of these people who left the faith in addition to their own sins. They must atone for both. Those, however, who show the right way to a sinner so that he repents and becomes a true Christian, will be pardoned and many of their old sins will be forgiven. These sinful clergymen ruined many souls, so God puts them together with the greatest criminals, blasphemers, adulterers, the greedy, and other blood suckers. You saw, Dushan, how the righteous and the sinners look, and exactly as you have seen them, they will appear before our Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Judgement where they will be

judged according to their deeds."

The righteous people were also labeled according to their professions. Bakers, butchers, and merchants held their scales, but their measurements were to the advantage of buyers. They gave to charity. They pitied the unlucky, the miserable, and the hungry. They provided them with food and drink. They housed travelers for overnight stays, were religious, and obeyed all of God's commandments. Their sins were forgiven by remorse, by fasting, by prayers, by taking communion, by giving alms, and by doing other good deeds. They forgave others and God forgave them.

Among both the sinners and the righteous I recognized my relatives and friends, but my angel warned me, "Dushan, you are forbidden to tell by name how your relatives and friends look. You may describe only in general terms now the righteous and the sinners look."

After these words of my angel, the archangels sounded their trumpets and the spectacle disappeared. My angel then explained that on the day of Last Judgment, all living will join the resurrected and will be transformed to look like the resurrected with their deeds written on their foreheads. Then the archangels with their trumpets disappeared, and only my angel and I remained in the cloud. Alone, the angel continued, "Dushan, you are an honest man. You have a compassionate and kind heart, which keeps you from doing evil things to others. You hate liars, thieves, and hypocrites. You do not make fun of anyone. You could not be bought with all the money in the world. You believed in

God only superficially and you did that only as you remembered from your childhood. You do not follow the theory that man descended from monkey, but you have avoided persuasions, because you did not know anything about God. You have many bad habits and many sins. You like adultery. You would like to have every woman who is not your relative. You were pretty successful in that through your singing and by reading coffee cups. You lied only when you cheated on women, particularly your wife, to whom you even swore to convince her of your fidelity. You saw what happens to the promiscuous, how they decompose alive and are subjected to torture. You saw what happened to fortune-tellers. Therefore, do not read coffee cups anymore. Respect every young woman as your sister and every older woman as your mother; every young man as your brother, and every older man as your father. You must stop all cursing. Pray and ask God to forgive your sins; love people; hate only their bad deeds. Forgive others if you want your sins to be forgiven. Your righteousness and kindness outweighed all of your sins. You must take confession and communion in one of the Orthodox churches of Christ. After you confess and take communion - the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ - God will forgive your sins. Starting today sin no more, and cross yourself in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

At that moment, the angel crossed himself as an example to me. "In your prayers, call upon all saints and your Krsna Slava. the apostles, prophets, angels, archangels, cherubs,

and seraphs," he said. "and above all, and in the first place, the Most Holy, the Most Innocent, and the Most Blessed Mother of Jesus, Maria, since her glory, honor and sublimeness are greater than that of all the angels in heaven. She is the quick helper to all who call upon her with veneration for help.

Also remember this, Dushan: every sinner who is sincerely remorseful, who prays to God for forgiveness and calls upon all of us in heaven, will be joined by all of us in that moment. We will pray together with him to God our Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit that his sins be forgiven. In heaven then will reign great joy. From now on you must celebrate Saint Paraskeva -your Krsna Slava, whom your father also celebrates. She prays for all who celebrate and respect her. Dushan, I repeat what the great Apostle Peter told you earlier - use the rest of your life for your salvation. You can save yourself only if you fast, pray, take communion, and if you do good deeds. You must obey God's commandments as laws by which you must live until your death. For three months you are not to tell anyone what has happened to you today. After that you may tell your family and some of your friends.

Remember this also: when you pray to God, be calm and talk humbly: when you fast, do not be sad and depressed, but be cheerful and smile. No one needs to know your obligations. Continue to be sociable. Be joyful. Be moderate, and control yourself by your will power. With those who cry, cry, and try to comfort them. Obey laws and fulfill your duties to your country. Pray to God and put

Him above everything else. If you need spiritual advice or spiritual help, ask the Church of Christ. After we part, you must immediately go to the monastery Zica. In the church you will see the place where icons, candles, books, and other things are sold. There, on the shelf by the door, are the books. Buy the first, second, third, and fourth book in that order. When you return from the health spas, take the book in your collected works of Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic. That book is the Bible's New Testament which you tried to read but gave up too quickly, because you did not understand the importance of the opening genealogy. In the future you must read that book regularly." After these words, the holy Archangel blessed me with the sign of the cross and disappeared.

When this vision ended I woke up soaked with sweat and was so tired I could not move. The watch beside me showed 6 pm. Still under the strong influence of this vision, joy and fear alternately passed through me. I thanked God for permitting me to see all this. Lying so helplessly and thinking about all I saw in the last six hours my hand suddenly moved toward my face and I crossed myself. The fatigue nailing me to the bed suddenly disappeared and I rose full of joy. After freshening my appearance I went to the monastery Zica to get the books my angel told me to buy.

Except for one handsome monk, there was nobody in the monastery. I found out later that he was Father Gerasim. After I kissed icons and lighted candles, I approached the book shelf and asked Father Gerasim to give me the first

four in the row. In addition to these, I bought two more books which I liked, "Orthodox Missionary" and "Saint Sava's Bell" which had the face of the Most Holy Mother of Christ with Jesus Christ on the cover. I was about to leave when the monk asked me most politely from where I came. Fearing that I might reveal my recent experience, I answered him rather rudely, "That is not your business!" I turned away and left the church. The books I bought on the advice of my angel were:

1. Orthodox Book of Prayers

2. Life of the Lord Jesus Christ

3. Reading Book on Apologetics- Conversion on Faith

4. Small Canonic:

   Akathist to the Most Holy Mother of Christ

   Canonic to the Angel Protector

   Canonic of Remorse

After my return to the health spas, I examined the books and read completely the prayer book and the small canonic that evening.

The following day was a big holiday - St. Peter's Day. I went to monastery Zica for my first prayer, following eagerly all the ceremonies of the Holy Liturgy. The singing of nuns aroused memories of the sweet singing of angels in heaven's churches. My soul filled with the sweetest spiritual joy. I thanked the Lord for bringing this change

into my sinful life. I thanked him while before my eyes appeared my past life at various moments, troubled, sinful, and terribly empty. There was no light and there were no moments of consolation. These memories caused me deep sadness. I could not endure when the church started to vibrate from the solemn and glorious song "Ize cherubs," which announced the most sublime moment of the Holy Liturgy. I felt as if something burst inside my chest. I clenched my heart, but my eyes, the last barrier, could not hold anymore. My tears broke through and I felt as if an angel was washing my besmirched soul. The tears dropped into my open wounds and my soul sang: Glory to Thee, Oh Lord, Glory to Thee! My spiritual balance was established in that moment and I left the church serene, light, and spiritually satisfied.

The remainder of my stay in the health spas was completely devoted to my spiritual transformation. My old habits, like walking, listening to drinking songs, and other tendencies were left on the deserted street to wait in vain for my return. I spent my time in prayer, reading books, and thinking of all that happened to me.

After returning home, I abandoned reading coffee cups, stopped telling dirty jokes and participating in shallow conversations. I was kind and I smiled but I preferred to be alone vividly remembering my experience.

I could not get the words of the Apostle Peter out of my head, who told me to use the remaining years of my life for my salvation. I was very careful in the following three

months not to tell what had happened to me. I could not sleep during the night and spent much time reading, praying and crying. I fasted rigorously, and asked my wife to prepare lean meals for me on Wednesdays and Fridays, but she and our son could eat whatever they wanted.

It was very strange that my wife never asked me about my regular fasting which began upon my return from the health spas. The first time she asked was two days before three months were to elapse - during the time when I could not tell about my vision. While eating lunch my wife asked, "What happened to you? In the last three months you've become an entirely different person. I cannot recognize you anymore. We have been married eighteen years, and you never fasted once in all that time, let alone on Wednesday and Friday of every week. You don't read coffee cups anymore. You've lost your former sense of humor. You don't gather the women from our neighborhood to tell them funny stories. What stopped me from asking you about all this and forced me to prepare your food separately?" Well, God's might did not allow my wife to ask me anything until the three months were almost over. I told her to be patient for two more days, and then I would tell her everything.

Two days later I gathered my wife, her sister, and my son to hear my story. I told them everything as it happened. They crossed themselves in amazement; they believed all I said. Without asking their opinion, I told them, "From today I want you to stop cursing. I advise you to pray to God and to go to church. We will celebrate our Slava, Saint Paraskeva, regularly. I also advise you to fast and to take

communion, and not to object to my fasting on Wednesday, Friday, and on all other fast days. I also do not want to be disturbed when I pray to the Lord at home."

My wife and my son promised to stop cursing, to believe in God, to cross themselves before and after meals and before going to bed, and to celebrate Krsna Slava. They did not agree to fast every fast day, to go to church, or to pray in the morning and in the evening. My wife said she would take communion once a year, and that both she and our son would fast on Good Friday, Holy Cross Day, and on the feast of the Decapitation of Saint John the Baptist. I did not attempt to force them to be more devoted to saving their souls, if they did not feel like doing it voluntarily.

Several days later I went to monastery Zica to confess and take communion. Before I decided upon Zica, I thought very long about where I should go. Finally the thought prevailed that it would be best if I went to where all of these things had happened.

When I arrived at the monastery, I asked a nun to tell Bishop Vasilije that I would like to confess and take communion and that I felt the need to do that before him. I told her briefly what had happened to me and that because of my experience I wanted to see the bishop. I soon received permission to do so. When I entered his room, he stood waiting for me. I bowed and said, "God help us!" He answered, "God help us, my son!" Then I kissed the cross in his hand, then his hand, and said, "Reverend, bless me." "God bless you, my son!" answered the bishop.

He noticed that I was nervous, so with a soft voice he offered me a chair. He asked from where I came, and I told him that I was born in Zakuta, but that I had lived in Kragujevac for a long time. He smiled and said, "You were born in my diocese." The bishop was further interested to know whether I had a family and where I worked. Then he asked me to tell him patiently and calmly everything that had happened to me. I told him all from beginning to end. While I talked, he watched me attentively and listened carefully. Here and there he crossed himself in amazement and thanked the Lord for his mercy and divine gift saying, "God have mercy! and "My Lord, Your might, power, and mercy are great."

When he heard everything, he told me that my soul most likely left my body during my vision and that during that time I was dead.

"Are you spiritually ready to confess?" asked the bishop. When I gave a positive answer, he told me to kiss the cross and the icon and then to kneel. The bishop then covered my head with the epitrachelion and said, "Dushan, my son, confess now all of your sins. Do not conceal anything. I will listen and then I will say a prayer for forgiveness. After that you will receive Holy Communion - the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ - and the Lord will forgive you your sins. Speak freely about all your acts of sins, words and thoughts and your entire life. Do not fear that I will tell anyone about your sins. Only the Lord and I will know. We who take confession must keep the secret."

These words relaxed me completely, and I told him slowly about all my sins. During the confession I cried, sobbed, and prayed to the Lord and the Mother of Jesus Christ to forgive me, since I cursed both of them. After I told him all the sins I could remember, Bishop Vasilije read the prayers for a long time above my head and asked me several times whether I had remorse for my sins. Crying, I answered him that I repented from the bottom of my heart and my soul, and I promised to stay away from sins. When he finished the prayer he removed the epitrachelion from my head. I again kissed the cross and the icon. Immediately thereafter, the bishop anointed me and started to read the prayers before Communion.

When I took Holy Communion I felt indescribable pleasure and relief. The feeling experienced after the first real and sincere confession is impossible to describe. Joy, happiness, satisfaction, and lightness filled and delighted my soul. I felt born again. When I told the bishop how I felt, he said, "Dushan, my son, that is the sign that the Lord has forgiven all your sins. You have been blessed. What you saw and heard is great, and I hope that from now on that you will not sin again."

I received much useful advice from the bishop. He told me to think about death more often, since one who thinks of death will sin less. He also told me that I should not fear a brief earthly life, because this life is short in comparison with eternity. I might live to be a hundred years old, but I should always pray as if I might die tomorrow.

I am very happy that the Lord's mercy put me back on the road of faith. I thank the Lord from the bottom of my heart and from the whole of my soul for all rewards, reprimands and punishments which he gives me through His Holy Providence.

I pray to the Lord that all who become acquainted with my spiritual restoration may believe in it. I hope it reveals to them, as it did to me, the right road of salvation for their souls.

Have blessing and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.